

The Inquirer.

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[ONE PENNY.

The Inquirer.

ESTABLISHED 1842.

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A SERMON by the Rev. Dr. MARTINEAU
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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

CHRISTMAS week heralds the New Year, and with the joy of the great festival of human brotherhood in our hearts, we wish our many friends, near and distant, 'A Happy New Year.' Some measure of the goodwill that supports THE INQUIRER in its endeavour to serve the cause of true religion may be seen from the list, printed above, of those who have undertaken to contribute to its pages during the coming year. But these are a small part of the company of friends who have its interest at heart. We trust

that in this year the paper may prove itself, even in a larger measure than before, worthy of a cordial support, and that its message may be carried into further fields, and with new power into the hearts and homes of our whole people.

WE pass into the New Year not unburdened with national anxieties. It would have been a beautiful Christmas gift to the whole nation, could peace and goodwill have been preached in a most practical way by employers and employed, and the long and disastrous strife of the Engineers have been brought to a happy issue. It must have been a sad Christmas in many homes, and still there seems little prospect of a settlement.

THE frontier war in India brings home to our people a great responsibility, to which we cannot be indifferent; the movements of Russia and Germany in the Far East lead to ponderings of what may be England's duty in the near future. Let us hope that when the hour of trial comes it may appear that there are other motives besides the determination, at any cost, to secure a good market which shape the policy of this country.

THE celebration of Mr. Gladstone's birthday on Wednesday last, suggested to the *Daily News* the making of a list of 'The World's Old Men.' Oldest of all is the Right Hon. C. P. Villiers, and our own veteran and beloved teacher stands third on the list; for while Mr. Gladstone is now 88, Dr. Martineau was 92 in April last. That we are permitted to-day to publish another of his sermons is among the happiest auguries for this new year, and a privilege for which we are truly grateful.

WE shall publish next week a sermon by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, the sermon which he preached at Rosslyn Hill Chapel, in November last, a glorious appeal for more strenuous faith and deeper feeling in our religious life. We are glad to see from the announcement of the Special Services Committee that Mr. Brooke is to preach in many places throughout the country during the coming months, beginning with Hackney on the morning of Sunday week. His visits cannot fail to be sources of great refreshment and encouragement. On Thursday, January 20th, we understand that Mr. Brooke is to lay the foundation stone of the Waverley-road Church, at Small Heath, Birmingham.

MR. A. M. BOSE, who accompanied Keshub Chunder Sen on his memorable visit in 1870, and was one of the first Indian students to graduate at Cambridge, is now in England. He holds a distinguished position

at the Bar in Calcutta, and is one of the leading men in politics, education, social reform, and the Brahmo Somaj. The City College, which has now grown into a great institution, owes its foundation and prosperity to him. As representative of the University of Calcutta, he was until recently a member of the Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal; and at the great meeting of the National Congress, twelve months ago, which was attended by about 4000 persons from different parts of India, Mr. Bose's speech on higher education was one of the chief events. For several years he was President of the Sadharan Somaj, to which he has been closely attached from its formation. Mr. Bose has come to England chiefly for rest and change, but we understand he has consented to preach at Effra-road, Brixton, on January 9.

MR. B. B. NAGARKAR's friends, on both sides of the water, will be highly gratified to hear that the Sunday Lecture Society of Birmingham has selected him as one of their lecturers this season. To-morrow evening (Sunday, the 2nd inst.) he speaks in the Birmingham Town Hall on 'India and her People: their Social and Domestic Life.' The Town Hall has a seating capacity of 3,000; and at these lectures, we understand, the Hall is usually full. India, at present, occupies a prominent place in the minds of English people, and it cannot fail to be of interest to hear what Mr. Nagarkar will say about his own country.

THE *Indian Magazine and Review*, which was started by Miss Mary Carpenter in 1871, begins a new series with 1898. It supplies information respecting educational and social progress in India, and contains articles of general interest as to the present and past of that country, notices of books, etc. The price is now 3d., or 3s. annually. It is forwarded post free by Mr. J. P. Phillips, 121, Fleet-street, E.C., or by the publishers, Messrs. A. Constable & Co., 2, Whitehall-gardens, S.W.

CHARTERHOUSE is to gain what Liverpool will lose in the Principal of her University College. Dr. Rendall was educated at Harrow and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was appointed Principal of the new University College in Liverpool in 1881, and has earned the gratitude and admiration of the whole community, not only by his administrative ability, and the manner in which he fulfilled his professorial duties, but also by the rare skill and tact with which he represented the College in the city, and succeeded in impressing a great commercial community with the value of such a centre of higher education in its midst.

THE *Spectator* is interested in the question of the creation of more spiritual Peers to represent various religious bodies beside the Church of England in the House of Lords. The question is raised by the rumour, hardly to be credited, that Lord Salisbury is about to make Cardinal Vaughan a Peer. While this would be altogether inadmissible by itself, giving representation to the Roman Catholics, and leaving the great bodies of Nonconformists out in the cold, our contemporary thinks that the matter might be worth considering on a more inclusive plan. Eight new spiritual Peers might be created, two Roman Catholics, two for the Scotch Presbyterians, and the rest for England.

The four English seats in the new spiritual Peerage would, as a rule, naturally fall one to the Wesleyans, one to the Baptists, one to the Congregationalists, and one to the Unitarians, for the last body, though numerically small, makes up by intellectual prestige for its narrowness of membership. The Wesleyan or Methodist sects are, of course, numerous, and in their case, and in a lesser degree among the Baptists, it would rather be the men than the sects who would be considered. The Crown, in fact, would, to begin with, pick out the four most distinguished Nonconformists it could find, and later on, when vacancies occurred, replace them, giving always due weight to such considerations as the need for not appearing to exclude any sect from representation.

Here is matter for pleasant speculation. Who shall be the first Unitarian Peer?

THE Constantinople correspondent of the *Daily News* reports that the researches being carried on at Nippur, some account of which appeared in a recent notice in our pages, have proved highly successful. A large number of clay tablets have been found, many in the most perfect state of preservation. A particularly rich store was unearthed at what proved to be the office of a firm of merchants, and much quaint and, indeed, valuable material has been already deciphered. Some Biblical side-lights are claimed as a result of the new discoveries, which relate to the fifth century B.C. Whether the identification of Nippur with Nimrod is a valid one time will tell; but there can be no doubt that the explorers are greatly adding to our knowledge of the long-buried past.

WE have received the January number of two little sixteen-page monthly magazines intended for circulation among our churches. The *Seed-Sower*, edited by the Revs. L. P. Jacks and Joseph Wood, is drawing to the close of its fifth year, and has fully justified itself as a vigorous and successful parish magazine. It is localised, with a special cover, by Essex Church and Unity Church, London; All Souls', Belfast; the Great Meeting, Leicester; the New Meeting, Kidderminster; the Western Union (for its churches); and by other places. It has contained from time to time a number of admirable sermons and other articles of stimulating interest, and has a regular children's page. Such a magazine can be of great service in a congregation, the cover serving as a local calendar for the month, and furnishing another useful means of communication between a minister and his people.

BUT if it is desirable that there should be such a parish magazine, well fitted to be localised by our churches, we confess that in our small community it would appear to us better that there should be only one, and

that that one should be well supported and made as good as possible. What is wanted in such a magazine is not, in our view, papers on subjects of burning controversy; for, even if it were otherwise appropriate, it is aggravating to have to wait from month to month for a slowly drawn-out argument, which must wait more months before there can be any full discussion. Such matters are surely more usefully dealt with in a weekly paper, where the truth can be more rapidly and effectively sifted out, and in our parish magazine we should prefer to find more positive nutriment for the religious life, matter which we should be glad to think was welcomed in all the homes of our people.

SOME of our friends in the north do not seem satisfied with the *Seed-Sower*, and are unwilling to allow *Light on the Way* to die at once and altogether. They have therefore begun the issue in its place of *The New Kingdom*. The editor, as we announced last week, is the Rev. J. A. Pearson, of Oldham, and business communications are to be sent to the Rev. W. R. Shanks, of Manchester. We cannot wish our friends anything but well, and yet our desire for closer union and the strengthening of a common religious life among our whole people touches this matter also.

WITH the new year the Boston *Christian Register* is to appear in a new form, and the price is to be reduced from three dollars to two for the year; that is, roughly speaking, it becomes a twopenny instead of a threepenny paper. An editorial note describes it as 'a family journal of religion, ethics, and theology.' The *Register* has for many years been a welcome visitor to this country, full of strength and brightness, interesting and stimulating. It represents the religious life of our Unitarian brethren across the Atlantic, and we are always the better for the touch of their vigorous life.

NEXT week's INQUIRER will contain the first of two articles by the Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A., on St. Augustine and his 'Confessions.' These are the first of a series of special articles on notable religious books, which we hope to publish once a month during the year, including articles on the 'Imitatio Christi,' by the Rev. W. E. Addis, M.A.; Dante's 'Divina Comedia,' by the Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A.; 'Pensée,' by the Rev. Henry Gow, B.A.; George Herbert's 'Temple,' by the Rev. Ambrose Bennett, M.A., and others later in the year.

THE sermon in memory of the late Rev. George Beaumont, preached in Gateacre Chapel on Sunday, November 28, by the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, has been printed by request. It bears the inscription, 'A Beloved Brother and a Faithful Minister and Fellow-servant in the Lord,' and is a tribute as simple, earnest, and affectionate as the life which it commemorates.

THE week's Obituary includes the following: Mr. Charles Harrison, Member of Parliament for Plymouth, and still more widely known as one of the most efficient members of the London County Council. He was a brother of Mr. Frederic Harrison, and his death seems to have been hastened by a chill contracted at the funeral of Sir Frank Lockwood.—Mr. Munro Drysdale, a Liverpool timber merchant and evangelistic preacher,

who drew great crowds to his services in Hengler's circus.—The Archdeacon of Wells.

LAY PREACHERS.

THE most effectual preaching is not always done from the pulpit. A single word, often only a look or a gesture from a man filled with indignation at some wrong or cruelty, steadfast at any cost to hold to his integrity, or touched with quick sympathy for suffering, will manifest the truth of divine life more forcibly than many eloquent words. And so it is that one finds among those who do speak on matters of religion, occasionally a man of halting speech, and perhaps of little learning, who yet impresses by an indescribable inward grace, and ministers with power of the deeper things of the Spirit.

Not all humble and illiterate preachers are of this sort, but how genuine may be their power we know from many instances.

The Rev. W. J. Dawson, writing, in the *British Weekly*, some 'Memories of the Manse,' gives the following description of some humble Methodist preachers thirty years ago:—

In a wide country-side, such as I depict, the minister was simply chief among a host of preachers. He was surrounded by a great band of 'local preachers'; men of no education for the most part, but often of rare natural ability and warm hearts. These men read their Bibles, they had a deep and religious experience, they were profoundly earnest, and they had a genuine passion for preaching. Many of them had been saved from lives notoriously godless and wicked, and 'they spake as joy did make them speak.' They spoke in the language of the common people, using homely metaphors and plain idioms. 'We like So-and-So,' said a fisherman to me once; 'he talks our sort o' talk' and I thought the saying significant. Some of the most powerful sermons I have ever heard were preached by uneducated Cornish local preachers. One of the men to whom I owed most in my young religious life was a poor man called Joe Smithers. On the week-days he hawked coal in a donkey-cart; on the Sundays he preached in the surrounding villages, with an oratorical force and ability which the greatest public speaker might envy. His expositions were often startlingly original; I once heard him explain 'gross darkness' as 'a hundred and forty-four times darker than dark.' I was brought up in close contact with men who for a lifetime had preached every Sabbath without fee or reward, and the natural result was that at sixteen I found my own way to the pulpit. I have preached in a multitude of villages to ploughmen, fishermen, and artisans, who were generous to forgive my errors and to encourage my hopes. Men like Solomon Gill are no inventions; I have been their guest, heard them pray, and known the noble sanctity of their lives. These men were apostles without knowing it, and often philosophers and poets too. And such men are still the strength of Methodism, the evangelists of the villages, the source from which the ranks of the ministry are recruited, the unadorned but eloquent priests of the common people, ordained by a diviner hand than man's, and anointed with a holier consecration.

EPPS'S COCOA.—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING.—'By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected COCOA, Mr. Epps has provided for our breakfast and supper a delicately flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame.'—*Civil Service Gazette*.—Made simply with boiling water or milk.—Sold only in packets and pound tins, by Grocers, labelled—'JAMES EPPS & Co., Ltd., Homoeopathic Chemists, London.'

BY THE OFFICE FIRE.

LAST week an old friend of ours sat here, with his feet upon the fender. He sat for a long time looking into the fire, thinking of many things, and spun out a long, pleasant chat about this office and the paper that goes out from it every week,—about the humours and the pathos of the work, its trials and delights, and what has been done and may still be done by willing helpers to sustain it. We know him well, this friend of ours. For ten years he has been working here, following a veteran of long service; for ten years he has worked quietly and steadfastly, bravely and cheerfully, fulfilling to the best of no mean powers a difficult task. Who will wonder that, having at the same time charge of a growing church, he should feel the strain too great to be continued, and should be glad in the future to be spared a double burden? All honour to him, and thanks for many acts of kindness, and much that has been good and helpful in the paper as he has sent it out; and all good wishes to him and to his church, who now can put their whole strength into an undivided service.

As he sat here last week he spoke of a new friend waiting at the door. Not long afterwards that individual looked in. He came up in Christmas week, with the voice of affectionate farewells from his northern home lingering in his heart. He came with a certain fear, wondering how he might bear himself in this great change. To quiet strange forebodings he went into the shadow of St. Pauls, and in that great calmness and the lovely music of evensong received a message to be undismayed.

When he looked in here, the place was empty, but the fire was burning still. Our friend had thought to poke it out when he left, but the fire in this little office is not to be quenched by any poking. There is still a cheerful blaze. And here are a pair of shoes! They belong to the office and the Editor. Will they fit? New shoes are not always easy fitting, and to put new feet into old shoes is also not infrequently a doubtful business. But we hope to step into these shoes without any grave catastrophe, and to wear them without dishonour.

And here our friend has left a message with the shoes, a message repeating as a pleasant greeting in a lonely room a cordial assurance he gave some time ago: 'Do not think I am going to desert the ship. I shall stay and help you!' That is the loyalty of a true heart. He spoke of a new Captain taking his place upon the bridge; but we are mates together, and it is a goodly company that mans the ship. Never fear! We hope to steer a straight course, and, God willing, shall weather the stiffest gale.

PROVINCIAL LETTERS.

IN the columns of 'News from the Churches,' we publish every week intelligence as to meetings, special services, and work of various kinds that is being done by the congregations belonging to our fellowship, and we have also published from time to time letters from special correspondents, who have written more fully of what is going on in their own districts. During the present year we hope to receive a regular supply of such Provincial letters, so that every week, except perhaps during the holiday months, we may publish a letter from some part of the country, from a correspondent whose

name will be known, and whose judgment and opinion will be valued.

These letters are not intended as a substitute for paragraphs of local news. From some districts there may be perhaps only one letter during the year. They are to be rather messages from trusted workers, taking a broader survey of the conditions and progress of religious life in each district. The scope of the letters will be very various, telling not only of the special work of our own churches, but noting how it stands in regard to other movements, furnishing, perhaps, suggestions or warnings from the activity of other religious bodies in the district, or in fact, dealing with any matter that may fitly concern our whole community.

We may ask of our correspondents the old question, 'How doth Truth prosper?' What is the prospect in your district for the progress of enlightenment and a reverent faith; what is being done in the service of the Kingdom of God? And the answers may serve to quicken faithfulness in other districts also, to encourage fresh endeavours, and to deepen the sense of unity and brotherhood in a common work.

In some districts our churches are much stronger than in others, and there is far more activity to be chronicled. From Lancashire and Yorkshire and the Midlands, and from London, there may be more scope for such letters than from some other quarters. But we ought to hear also from the most isolated and difficult posts of duty. If there is little to be told of progressive work, we ought to know under what discouragements our friends are working, and perhaps the interchange of knowledge and of sympathy may kindle some fresh light, and show how more effectual help may be rendered to those whose need is the greatest.

The first letter of the series will appear next week, and will deal with London, which, in the equal fellowship of our churches, may not unfittingly be reckoned as a province in itself.

RELIGION AND POLITICS.

SOME of our friends may notice a change, which has been made in the sub-title of this paper, by which the terms 'political and literary,' following 'religious,' as descriptive of its character, are omitted. The reason for this change must not be sought in any new departure of policy, but simply in the desire to express with greater conciseness the one essential purpose of the paper.

THE INQUIRER is a religious journal. It seeks to be a true organ of the religious life of a certain group of churches, and at the same time to maintain a testimony before the world as to the meaning and power of liberal religious thought and life. It desires to be of service to all reverent seekers after truth, and to be welcomed by all who have faith in freedom, to whatever church they may belong.

But for this very reason it is impossible that it can be indifferent to any field of human duty. The vital principle of our churches, and the principle we have constantly to maintain before the world, is that religion is concerned with the whole of life, that God is with us here in the midst of the common things of daily duty, and we have to learn to understand and to declare what are the bearings of his inward law of righteousness on all human concerns. Our faith is in the Kingdom of God on earth. In our prayers

we are not unmindful of this. No true prophet of God is silent on the great questions which affect the life, whether of individual men and women or of nations. And it would be strange indeed, if a religious journal should so narrow its view as to take no cognizance of such matters. THE INQUIRER will therefore continue, as it has done from the first, to remember that it is 'righteousness which exalteth a nation.' There is no need that it should now follow the practice of earlier years, and furnish regular parliamentary reports and other items of public intelligence. Neither in politics nor in literature nor other branches of human interest can it attempt, nor does it desire to attempt, to do the work of the daily and weekly journals which, with great resources, so admirably supply all such needs. But in the maintenance of a fearless religious testimony it must have a word to say upon whatever question touches the conscience of an earnest religious man.

It will not, therefore, be supposed that the modification of our sub-title indicates any intention of avoiding difficult questions of politics. We know the danger of making mischief, of rousing only personal animosities and the bad blood of party strife. But we cannot admit that politics need be degraded to the level unhappily indicated by that danger. Our religious faith bids us strive to be true citizens of a great nation, worthy to be called citizens of the Kingdom of God. We have responsibilities not in this country alone, but in every quarter of the globe, in India, in South Africa, in many colonies, and in the intercourse of nations. We cannot be silent or indifferent where the honour of our country and our whole people is concerned; and in such matters, as in all that affects the social well-being of the community at home, it is the duty of each one to get an understanding mind and a fearless heart. And whoever has any word given him to speak, it is a shame if, from any motive but the public good, he keep it back. It ought to be possible so to speak on all public questions as to make it felt by men of every party, that amid even acute differences of judgment and opinion there is a common desire to make for righteousness, and that discussion is carried on solely in the interest of truth.

THE INWARD LIFE.

DURING the past two and a half years a column of THE INQUIRER, headed 'The Quiet Hour,' has very frequently been devoted to selected passages chiefly from devotional and practical religious literature, both in verse and prose, ending with a few words of prayer. These selections have been much valued by readers, both in this country and beyond the seas, and nothing could be further from our thought than indifference to such a desire for the quickening of the inward life of personal religion. But we are not sure that our friends will be best served by the attempt to maintain a constant supply of such extracts of religious verse, in which it would be very difficult for an unlimited time to preserve a fitting standard of excellence. It might be better through constant companionship to grow familiar with some cherished book or books of religious poetry, in which so much of that which is best is already gathered up—such books as the late Robert Crompton Jones's selections, 'Poems of the Inner Life,' and 'Hymns of Duty and Faith,' and Mrs. Tileston's 'Quiet Hours,' and 'Sunshine in the Soul,' which might naturally lead to a

closer acquaintance with the greater poems from which many of these selections are made.

And so in regard to the weekly printing of a few words of prayer. The great need is that we should learn to be quiet and know that we are with God in the world, and then that we should really pray our own prayers. The words of another, spoken in our hearing or read in silence to oneself, may help; but it must be our own reverence and trust and self-surrender, our own desire and strenuous endeavour, that are the prayer to our Father in secret; and for such true prayer we are not sure that more help will not be found in the constant use, by those who feel the need, of some cherished book of prayer, than by the reading every week of a few fresh words.

But whether another's words of prayer are asked for or not, it must be helpful to come in contact with the great and beautiful thoughts of other minds, which serve to strengthen and uplift, and may well quicken in the heart a living prayer. And while we trust that *THE INQUIRER* will always furnish some such stimulus for the true inward life, we desire to urge upon our friends the daily use of some manual of devotion. If it is only a few moments every morning, life is stronger and steadier for the upward look which this implies, and the silent aspiration which may become a prayer at the moment or at any time during the day or at night. A few verses of familiar Psalm, Gospel, or Epistle could surely not be too much for the busiest man who, amid the turmoil and the rush of life, desired to keep in touch with the deeper calmness of God.

Perhaps the simplest way for the discipline of this good habit is by the help of one of the many books of selections prepared for daily use. The little manuals, 'Daily Meditations' and 'Night unto Night,' published by the Rev. W. G. Tarrant will be already familiar to many of our readers. They contain selections for every day in a month, together with a short prayer for each day; and there are various guilds which have similar manuals of their own. But there are also books of selections for a whole year, which are not only admirable for this purpose of individual use, but among friends have often been a silent bond of union, in the knowledge that those who perhaps are far apart are yet being daily nourished by the same great thoughts and united in a common aspiration.

Two of the best of these books have come to us from America. Of Mrs. Tileston's 'Daily Strength for Daily Needs' we hope to speak next week. The other is 'Day unto Day,' a little book published in 1871 by the American Unitarian Association (Price 4s., or, in a cheaper form, 3s. net.) On the titlepage is a quotation from Richter: 'Give me,' said Herder to his son, as he lay in the parched weariness of his last illness, 'give me a great thought that I may quicken myself with it.' And, in addition to Scripture texts for every day in the year, there are also short selections from 286 writers of more recent times. This book has long been cherished in the homes of many of our people; but for those to whom even now it may be still unknown we will add a few of the daily selections.

January 1st.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.—*Numb.* vi. 24, 25, 26.

Welcome we the New Year's greeting,
Joyous all our songs shall be;
For our years, though swiftly fleeting,
Lead us nearer, Lord, to thee.

Let your good wishes turn into acts; let no hard thing be done even towards an enemy; and let those around you be the happier because you are in the midst of them.—*EPHRAIM PEABODY.*

We cannot tell what shall be on the morrow; but we can choose what we ourselves will be. We can resolve to live faithfully, whatever betides. . . . We can walk with the bright angels, and wrestle with the dark ones, and oblige the flying hours to leave a blessing behind.—*N. L. FROTHINGHAM.*

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.—*Deut.* xxviii. 2.

January 9th.

In your patience possess ye your souls.—*Luke* xxi. 19.

Jesus did not merely say, 'Be patient,' but he impressed upon his disciples the truth that by patience, and patience only, they would possess their souls, keep the mastery over themselves, have their powers and faculties under their own control, and thus be enabled in the most trying emergencies to see clearly and to decide correctly.—*GREENWOOD.*

Why should I murmur? for the sorrow
Thus only longer-lived would be;
Its end may come, and will, to-morrow,
When God has done his work in me:
So I say trusting, as God will!
And trusting to the end, hold still.

JULIUS STURM.

Learn patience first; for patience is the part
Of all whom Time records among the
great;

The only gift I know, the only art
To strengthen up our frailties to our fate.

T. W. PARSONS.

Woe unto you that have lost patience!
and what will ye do when the Lord shall
visit you?—*Eccles.* ii. 14.

May 2nd.

By this shall all men know that ye are
my disciples, if ye have love one to another.
—*John* xiii. 35.

This love of one another was to be the mark and seal of Christians: it was to distinguish them from other men, so that those who were not Christians, looking upon their lives, and seeing them free from the jealousies, the quarrels, the violent and bad passions of other men, might confess that God was in them of a truth, and that so heavenly a fruit could proceed from nothing else than the tree of life eternal.—*THOMAS ARNOLD.*

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love!
The fellowship of Christian minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers:
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

FAWCETT.

Jesus prayed—'That they may all be
one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in
Thee, that they also may be one in us.'—*John* xvii. 21.

August 21st.

Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between
me and thee.—*Gen.* xiii. 8.

Blest are the sons of peace,
Whose hearts and hopes are one;
Whose kind designs to serve and please
Through all their actions run.—*WATTS.*

To learn to bear and forbear, to prefer to lose the argument rather than the temper, to be willing to suffer a great wrong rather than do the least wrong, to give way to the unfortunate temper of others rather than to gain a point at the cost of a war of words—a few such plain habits would prevent a world of trouble, and spread joy and happiness through scenes where every blessing may be poisoned by the corrosion of embittered feelings.—*A. A. LIVERMORE.*

Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues.—*SHAKESPEARE.*

For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.—*James* iii. 16, 18.

ON POSTAL MISSION SERVICE.

THERE are in our time very many who are seeking for clearer light and truer conviction in matters of religion. Some have been brought up to accept a creed which can no longer satisfy, others have grown up or have drifted into neglect of all earnest religious thought, or have been driven by revolt from superstition or repulsive doctrine to an opposite extreme of denial, but then in the desert have found a new hunger of heart for deeper insight and the quietness of faith in the Eternal. From both sides many earnest seekers after truth have been attracted to the teaching of Unitarians, which affirms the inherent religiousness of human nature, and finds in the reason and conscience and the spiritual affections and aspirations of man the surest guidance and the open way to a satisfying knowledge of God.

Some of these friends are drawn into the fellowship of our churches, but many others are out of reach of such close union, and receive what help passes from us to them only through the medium of books and papers, or, it may be, through the sympathy of some friendly correspondent.

To these scattered friends our Postal Missions have been of the greatest service. Many a solitary seeker after truth, who was perhaps terrified at a growing doubt, and thought himself alone in a religious world which turned from him with aversion, has been attracted by the offer, through a public advertisement, of liberal religious literature, and has found, not only the guidance which he needed in his thought, but the religious sympathy for which he was hungering.

This good work had its origin in the earnest faithfulness of one woman. Sarah Ellis, of Cincinnati, Ohio, had been eager to be of service in the cause of religious truth, and would gladly have gone out among her people as a missionary preacher, but the physical strength was denied her, and she was becoming a confirmed invalid. So in the early spring of 1881 she began to use the post office as her missionary agent. She sent out large numbers of books and pamphlets, and soon received an astonishing response from many distant places: messages of grateful thanks from those who had been hungering for new light, appeals for more literature for further distribution, and confidences which established the most helpful relations of religious friendship between this one humble worker and those to whom she had become a veritable messenger of God. Sarah Ellis died in 1886, but now, both in

America and in this country, there are many groups of earnest, cultivated women, engaged in this most admirable work. Their correspondents are numbered by thousands, throughout the country and in distant lands. Many, of course, are simply inquirers. Some are impelled only by intellectual restlessness and curiosity. But a large number are genuine seekers of religion, hungering hearts that find their best nourishment in the books sent out by these Postal Missions, often solitary ones who receive a true ministry of sympathy from those with whom, in borrowing books, they exchange letters of cordial friendship.

Such relations of private friendship cannot suffer any public intrusion. But we must rejoice to know that there are so many links of sacred confidence between our faithful workers and those for whom they carry on this silent, but most helpful, ministry. And the purpose of this article, without in any way interfering with that good work, which is now so widely carried out, is simply to offer to our scattered friends another hand of earnest friendship.

THE INQUIRER may find its way to many seekers after truth, and to many who have found a new gladness of religious life through the teaching of our books, and yet are solitary and out of reach of any church in which they can be satisfied to worship. To all such I desire to offer, from week to week, through this column 'On Postal Mission Service,' a channel of communication with other friends and a bond of genuine religious union. I trust that I may be able sometimes to speak a really helpful word as to the progress of thought, and new forms of truth, and of religious life. I shall be glad to hear from correspondents, known or unknown, as to how I might help them in their difficulties, and I will do my best to answer any questions. Letters addressed to the Editor of THE INQUIRER, referring to the purpose of this column, I shall receive in the confidence of friendship, and in what is written here it will be my aim to afford some helpful answer to every need so expressed.

And, above all, I desire to offer sympathy, and to deepen the sense of union and fellowship of spirit among those who perhaps are far apart, who cannot meet face to face, who cannot have the great happiness of united worship, but yet are one in the reverent and humble spirit in which they are seeking for a larger measure of divine truth.

One who is troubled with doubt in matters of religion often feels that he is becoming an outcast from among his friends, and that he is suffering loss from which he would be gladly saved. But it may be that he is being used, even against his will, in a higher service. It is not only for his own peace of mind that he must steadfastly face these questionings, and find the answer; he must take the burden up reverently and patiently, desiring only to know the truth and be assured that so he is giving himself up to God, who is the Fountain of all truth.

And even though he stand quite alone in the circle of his friends, he belongs to a great fellowship of those who in all humility are ready to endure hardness for the truth, and who in their quiet faithfulness, even though they know it not, have their own place of service in the kingdom of God.

PROFESSOR HENRY DRUMMOND'S addresses, which have just been collected and issued by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, are full of suggestion and stimulus. We shall notice the book shortly.

THINGS OLD AND NEW:

A NEW YEAR'S MEDITATION.

BY THE REV. JAMES DRUMMOND, M.A., LL.D.

'OLD things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' So said the Apostle Paul; but the change was within himself. He had not been transported into a new world, but his inward eye had been purified to see more deeply into the secrets of the eternal and unchanging Spirit. The most dispassionate observer unavoidably mingles with his perceptions something of his own idiosyncrasy, and we see rather the relation between ourselves and outward things than things absolutely as they are. To the sad and anxious mind Nature wears a sombre look; a thousand painful circumstances crowd the memory, and the tear-dimmed eye hardly notices the brilliance of the sun. The joyful, on the other hand, have a ready eye for what is bright and happy, and discover something cheerful even amid surrounding gloom. The degree in which our own personal condition blends with our perception varies with the freshness and intensity of the emotion by which we are swayed. If we are possessed by an absorbing thought or desire, it is reflected back by every object on which we gaze. When devotion to God enters the mind as a new revelation of human destiny and a new possibility for human life, all Nature becomes divine; her ancient sounds are changed into soul-piercing voices, with unimagined depth of meaning; her ancient sights substitute for an earthly a heavenly veil, and permit us to read the mystery behind. Friends, strangers, labours, pleasures, all are different; for we are not the same. The old relations are broken up, and all outward influences reach us through the medium of a new spirit. Thus, 'if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,' and looks forth upon a new creation. He surveys the world with a spiritual eye; and wonders, before unknown, rise to greet him; and duties, previously unthought of, solicit his toil.

It is seldom, however, that men are obliged to make up their minds in reference to so radical a change as that which affected the Apostle Paul, seldom that past and future appear so little akin. And yet the words of the apostle, with slight modification, almost seem to represent a law of the world's growth. Old things are continually passing away, and new things stepping into their places, not often through the shocks of revolution, but ceaselessly, in a never-ending progression. Day treads on day, and year on year, bearing each its own contribution of toils or pleasures, hopes or fears, and then dropping silently into the lap of time. Generation succeeds generation, and the aged are ever making room for the young. Institutions, governments, modes of worship, have their several life-times, some longer, some shorter; but the most venerated at last grow old, and yield to the general law. We do not often turn our attention to this unceasing flow, this receding of the old before the new; but when some striking change in our circumstances, or some marked period of time, like the birth of a new year, brings it vividly before the imagination, we cannot fail to be solemnly impressed. Are things only born to die, and is there no abiding ground, no eternal reality, behind these flitting appearances? Surely there must be One who has been 'our dwelling place in all generations,' and who gives their significance and value to the most ephemeral phenomena. It is only the forms of things that become

old and pass away; the spirit abides for ever, and knows not age. The organs of its manifestation run their appointed periods, and retreat before those that are more expressive; and the perpetuity of youth in the spirit is dependent upon the law of transition which affects all that is visible. The body, most beautiful and wonderful of fabrics, is laid to rest in the grave, that the spirit may no longer be encumbered with its tottering limbs and languid brain. Thus it is that the world, after a thousand centuries, is fresh and vigorous as when the sons of God shouted for joy over the splendours of its creation; and religion still breathes her aspirations and anoints the soul for the sacrifice of self, though altars have ceased to glow, and temples have crumbled into dust.

There are two very different orders of feeling excited in our minds by the necessity for change and the perpetual lapse of what is old and familiar, which, though they are frequently characteristic of different persons, are yet in the wise blended harmoniously together.

We have a natural feeling of pleasure in the advent of what is new. Fresh experiences and hopes are accompanied by greater keenness of enjoyment, and have a charm peculiar to themselves. Our Creator has mercifully adapted the constitution of our minds to the circumstances in which we are placed, and has for the most part made pleasant to us the change and variety which are needful to enlarge our experience and give breadth to our views. We are, indeed, constantly seeking for something new, whether in the form of pleasure, of knowledge, or of affection; and we should soon begin to feel our lives tedious, and become painfully conscious of an unsatisfied want, if each day were a precise copy of its predecessor, and brought nothing to extend the boundary of our ideas. Thus, that which is novel has, other considerations apart, a certain attractiveness for a strongly-marked tendency in our nature; and when that which is new is a great advance on that which went before, a grander temple for the habitation of the same spirit, and is seen to have an important bearing on the future of ourselves or of the world, our pleasure deepens into thankfulness, or ascends into rapture.

This instinctive and healthy gratification at what is new may, however, degenerate into a mere love of novelty, and lead to an undue depreciation of that which is old and tried. That quality which is merely an accident, and reveals nothing as to the moral value, or political expediency, or logical soundness of any new course may be accepted as its distinguishing attribute, and alone sufficient to entitle it to our reception. New views in religion, in science, or in politics, are received by many with a readiness and confidence utterly disproportioned to the evidence on which they rest, and lead away their votaries by the charm of their youthful appearance, destined themselves, when they have lost their one precious distinction, to make way for more juvenile competitors. That disposition which can recognise no virtues in the old and no deficiencies in the new fails to perceive the real merits of either. It is essentially shallow, and grounds its judgments, not on permanent principles or on the solid evidence of facts, but on its own transitory likings; and it is too conceited to perceive that its caprices are not the abiding foundation of truth, but rather are those enemies of truth against whose inroads it is one of

the most important acts of our moral and intellectual discipline to maintain a vigilant guard. Thus our love of the new needs to be counterbalanced by that other order of feeling to which we referred, our affection for the old.

This affection, when exercised within its legitimate sphere, is one of the sweetest and tenderest that God has implanted in the heart. It is far more than a want of pliability in our nature, or a stupid adherence to beaten paths. It is a grateful and venerating recognition of real deserts, and a feeling of loyalty towards that which has long been a trusted friend and helper. His is no profound soul who can easily break up old associations, who forgets his indebtedness to the past, and carelessly flings aside the forms through which truth once freely breathed, or in which eternal principles have found their temporary expression. The spirit gives sacredness to the symbol, and divides with it the love which it itself alone can win. The face and gesture of our friend are dear to us. A smile, a kiss, or a tear, often reach the depths; and the sound of the voice comes fraught with memories that none other can waken. With holy solicitude, we watch the aged and infirm body; and though we know that it must pass away, having finished its appointed purpose, yet when it has breathed forth the spirit which gave it all its worth, we look upon it with a reverent awe, and then tenderly and lovingly hide it from our sight. And so with everything we love. Fond devotion hangs around its age, and is tempted to think it a hard and inexorable law that old things must pass away. Regretfully we part from that which has borne high thoughts to the mind, light to the conscience, or religion to the soul; and we feel no ordinary pain when that is wrenched away around which our affections have twined, which have guided the helplessness of our childhood, or fostered the aspirations of our maturity.

It is easy to see whether the degeneracy of this affection must tend. It becomes blind conservatism in politics, superstition in religion. It reposes its faith in forms, and forgets the essence, and, by refusing to recognise the law impressed upon all visible things, becomes the parent of revolutions. It believes only in that which has been; and that which is new is in its eyes synonymous with the bad. It lives in fear rather than in hope; its blessings are buried in the past, and destruction looms in the rash and innovating future.

Thus, the two orders of feeling which we mentioned are mutually dependent for their healthy action, and are both needed to give completeness to the character. Reverence for the old, hope in the new, looking backwards and looking forwards, by their reciprocal action ensure the world's slow and steady progress. These apparently opposed feelings find their unity in veneration for the spirit rather than the form. It is good for us that the form, the perishing symbol, should go away, in order that the abiding comforter may come. That which is deepest in our love and reverence does not die. It reappears in another guise; the shape is different, but the substance is the same. Let us look behind the changing vesture into the eternal essence; and while our years pass by, bearing away beloved things that have run their allotted course, and bringing in new things around which cluster our confiding expectations, let us look upon the world with a

reverence and a hope ever fresh, with a memory charged with unnumbered blessings, and a faith which never loses its vision of a glory to be revealed. To those who rest in God all is well; for he grows not old, nor passes away. All else changes that we may find Him and love Him with supreme devotion. Through this year may He dwell in our hearts. Then we shall behold a creation ever new, a fairer and still a fairer arising from the ashes of the past; and we shall see that the glory of the old fades only before the dawning of a brighter day.

THE UNDOING OF BELIEF.

DID we live in a world without mysteries, where we had only to ask a question, and some angelic arm handed down the answer from the skies, there could be no more loyalty to truth, and the whole region of one of the noblest forms of spiritual education would be closed to us. But for the circumstance that on all hands we are encompassed by the unseen and unknown, we should become simple machines of thought, and our beliefs would be mere commodities, like the products of the loom or the forge, worth so much in the market and no more. It is the element of the undetermined that links all higher investigation, and especially the spheres of ethics and religion, to our moral life.

It were well, then, that we should think ourselves clear on these matters. Never again ought we to hear the question asked, which is still sometimes put in all seriousness, 'If the Bible is not true, what becomes of morality?' Consider what is involved in the phrase 'the truth of the Bible.' It cannot now be pretended that the perpetual authority of righteousness depends on the accuracy of a vast number of statements on an enormous variety of subjects made by a succession of writers, of whom but few are known, through a period of more than a thousand years. Yet it is on assumptions so gigantic that it has been sought to lay the whole foundations of our trust and love. Even among ourselves I have been told that the critical study of the Gospels makes havoc with religion. 'If so little can be known of Jesus, what knowledge can there be of God or immortality?' I am not concerned now to ask whether 'so little' may not be adequate to disclose the loftiest spirit of our race, and make his experience the quickener of our own. I plead that we shall not confound the records of the past with the revelations of the spirit. Let us be sure that the word of God in our own souls can outweigh a whole atmosphere of historic doubt, as the inches of mercury can balance the miles of ambient air. We may endeavour to disguise, but we never can evade, the necessity of finding the ultimate warrants of duty and of faith within. I knew one once, driven by political injustice in his youth into the blankest religious denial. Imprisoned after a university career in Germany for two years and a half, not only without trial, but without even knowing of what he was accused (this was possible half a century ago), he could not accommodate his outraged consciousness of rectitude with the God of his childhood's creed. As with Job, his condition would not harmonise with his conception of life. He never recovered from the shock to his early faith. But then he never lost the sensitiveness of his soul; the very treatment which undid his belief rendered his conscience all the more acute, concentrated on justice the fervent passion of

his heart, and in honoured age he abounded in gracious acts and kindly deeds. Had he only learned that in that high sense of righteousness, that scrupulous loyalty to duty, that tender affection which knit him to wife and child, he bore about with him the witness of the spirit, and lived through them in communion with the Eternal! There are not a few in our day from various circumstances in like case. Many of them are among the noblest workers of humanity in our time. Differences of training or of natural endowment, of personal history, temperament, philosophy, prevent them from seeing eye to eye with us. But when we witness the faithfulness of their service, the ardour of their courage and their love, and think of our frequent indolence, our unwillingness of sacrifice, our lack of ideals, shall we not humbly acknowledge that they will go into the kingdom of heaven before us?

There is, indeed, an undoing of belief which depends on causes deeper than those of mere literary inquiry or historic investigation. There are occasional crises in the lives of most individuals, as there are in the vicissitudes of nations, when there seems nothing left to be done, and we can only suffer, or see others suffer. And then the irresistible instinct of the soul is to cry out, 'Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might even come before his seat, I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.' Most people could give some excellent reasons why they should not have been visited by their particular trial. There is rarely a pain in one part of our persons but we think we could bear it better, if it were somewhere else. An unhappy chemist, whose child was knocked over by a reckless cyclist, one summer day, and killed, raged helplessly against the divine justice—Why was his child killed, *and not another*; what had he done that he should be bereaved and his neighbour escape? Even when sorrow does not beget this aggressive selfishness, it still craves for a change of its load. The young man who is stricken, on entering his career, with lingering disease, would have welcomed ruin cheerfully, and faced anything but to know himself a burden all his years. The fact is that we are sometimes under illusions in these matters. The limitations of our experience envelop us, and we are easily misled by defective imagination. The hideous atrocities of which we have been the impotent witnesses in Armenia cause us a kind of horror which the daily record of national brutality and crime does not excite. But I cannot see that cruelty is worse simply because there is more of it. The difficulty of reconciling suffering and sin with our ideas of God's justice and love is not increased by merely counting heads. A single thought or purpose of impurity stains 'the white radiance of eternity' as much as a whole city full of lust. A solitary murder is as hideous a blot upon the universe as ten thousand, and as much a defiance of God's will. But the occasional awakens our sympathy by its rarity; the chronic only deadens and benumbs. A tornado or a fire sweeps over a town, and half a continent rushes to its relief. In London there is a population of a million and a quarter permanently below Mr. Charles Booth's poverty line, and we say, 'Oh, yes, no doubt our social organisation is dreadfully defective,' and we grumble at the poor rate and pass on.

Setting aside, however, the perversions of view to which habit only too readily

accustoms us, two thoughts may help us as we contemplate the great mystery. In the first place, joy is as clear a presence in our life as pain. The sun still shines, though you may hide its glory with a threepenny-piece. Love is as strong a fact in our being as toothache or sciatica. It lasts longer, and goes a good deal deeper. The truth is that we are so greedy of happiness, we so commonly claim it in our own minds as a right, that the varied and exquisite delights that greet us day by day pass by half noticed, if they are not altogether ignored. It is only when we have learned to interpret the meaning of our gladness as a manifestation of God's sympathy towards us—and we cannot begin to do this too young—only when we have discovered its spiritual helpfulness in the glimpses which it opens to us of God's ineffable joy in giving joy, only when we have a little realised how manifold and how continuous is his communication of his life to ours, that we can faintly comprehend how wide and far-reaching are its issues for our thought of him, who, if he sometimes afflicts, doth much more give cheer, and exalt us to heavenly places, as he calls us to find our strength in his joy.

And, secondly, it is one of the mysteries of trial that it often touches lives that seem far removed from it, for the heroic resistance of evil or the courageous endurance of pain is not limited in its effects to a single brain, or confined to the reactions of one individual set of nerves. So curiously intertwined are the lives of men that we all at this moment draw for our support on the faithfulness of unknown multitudes, some older, some contemporary with ourselves. Conversely we cannot tell what soul we may not quicken by our own integrity, what spirit may not look (perhaps unconsciously) to us and be enlightened. In that strange literature of the unseen world which enshrines so many of men's subtlest thoughts and deepest feelings, there is a story attached to our own country which embodies in a weird and striking form this possibility of unseen helpfulness. It is related by the historian Procopius (in the sixth century of our era) that in ancient times there were, on the mainland south of the Channel, settlements of villagers and tillers of the soil, and traders to this island in their vessels. They were subject to the Franks, but paid no tribute, having had from of old to render by turns the burdensome service of transporting souls, for in this island was the abode of the departed. Those on duty for each night stay at home, it was said, until they hear a knocking at the door, and the voice of one unseen calling them to their work. Rising without delay, as though compelled by some invisible power, they go down to the beach, and there they see boats, though not their own, and they embark and take the oars. The boats are empty, but they are not the only passengers. Their skiff is loaded, till the gunwale almost sinks beneath the waters, with a precious freight of souls. In an hour they reach this island, though otherwise they could hardly make the voyage in a night and a day. When they arrive the vessel becomes empty till it is so light that only the keel rests upon the waves, and so, having performed their mysterious service, they return. Is there not here a singular and solemn parable of life? The invisible being who summons us to our tasks, the inward constraint which we may not resist, the common nature of the work required, the rapid flight of time under strange circumstance, the unknown spirits

helped upon the way—do we not seem to recognise them all? For we know not what souls we may not be secretly upholding by our own strenuousness. Could Job have seen beyond the burning edge of desert and of sky into the far off heart of other times, could Jesus have known beneath the olive trees that his broken words were not his alone, but those of awakened humanity in him, what hope might not have mingled with their pain! So to each one of us is committed by the grace of God in our several ways the cause of truth, of courage, of purity, of faithfulness, of love. Each one of these witnesses in our hearts, 'We are of God, he sent us, follow me': and following, though it be on rugged ways with bleeding feet, we need no more to look for God, for lo! he has been with us all the time.

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

AMERICAN NOTES.

THE Chicago *Inter-Ocean* compiles the opinions of many leading men as to the expediency of holding a second Parliament of Religions in connection with the Paris Exposition in 1900. The prevailing sentiment of Roman Catholics is decidedly unfavourable; while Protestant opinion is divided, some holding that the successful experiment of 1893 can hardly be repeated, while others believe that true religion has much to gain and nothing to lose by every comparative presentation.

Mr. Moody is to carry on winter campaigns in Pittsburg and Philadelphia. 'With all his power for good,' says the *Christian Register*, 'we suspect the wiser pastors in any city half dread his coming; not because of his sharp criticisms, but because their own best work is more difficult after he is gone.'

We are curious to see how the American churches receive the Rev. Charles Berry, who has gone over from England, partly to spread the idea of 'The National Free Church Council,' which is having such a great apparent success in England. The *Register* says:—'Dr. Berry seeks extended fellowship between various churches, but it must be of one stripe. He says, "The federation is limited to 'evangelical churches,' because, while there are the friendliest relations between the evangelical and so-called 'liberal' denominations, yet the work which is to be done, especially along evangelistic lines, is of a kind that makes co-operation impossible." Indeed? What is there except theological opinion which makes it impossible? If the evangelical and liberal churches are as friendly as Dr. Berry says they are on most questions except religion, why not on that! The simple fact is, the English Nonconformists are no broader or more inclusive than the Catholics whom they denounce, or the Episcopalians whom they seek to deprive of the privileges of State connection. They are trying to establish a federation of Wesleyans, Baptists, Congregationalists, on the exclusive principle upon which the Young Men's Christian Associations exist in this country. Evangelicalism is a clumsy substitute for Orthodoxy. It sounds a little larger, but it means the same. It rules out liberal communities which are not orthodox, and only postpones the settlement of the grave question of church unity at a time when it is in a fair way of settling itself on a broader and firmer foundation. We do not want anything on this continent which perpetu-

ates bigotry and exclusiveness.' It will be interesting to hear what reception Mr. Berry's idea, which has been aptly called 'Christian Union, Limited,' has with the real broad thinkers in the Evangelical Churches in the United States, who have been already accustomed to the very religious fellowship with Unitarians which Mr. Berry declares impossible.

We are glad to see that Rev. Theodore C. Williams, after his year in Europe, is again taking up the work, and taking it up in the West, where strong men are specially needed. He has accepted a six months' engagement at Oakland, Cal., just vacant by the removal of Rev. C. W. Wendte to Los Angeles. B. H.

OBITUARY.

MRS. S. F. WILLIAMS.

WE deeply regret to record the death of Mrs. Williams, the wife of the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams, of Hackney. It was known that her health was precarious, but the end came somewhat suddenly on Thursday, Dec. 23. For many years subject to serious attacks of asthma, Mrs. Williams had been unable to assume that active part in affairs that her tastes and her strong intelligence fitted her to take; but in the retirement of her home she followed with keen zest all our denominational life, and to the last maintained her interest in the movements of the time. Deep sympathy will be felt for her bereaved husband, in whose many and useful labours she was a faithful though generally unseen companion. Her remains were interred in the grave-yard attached to the new Gravel Pit Church, on Tuesday last, the Rev. W. Copeland Bowie officiating. Mrs. Williams, who was aged fifty-nine, had two daughters, each of whom is married, one residing in Paris and the other in Montreal.

SHORT NOTICE.

Sir James Young Simpson and Chloroform. By H. Laing Gordon. This is the third of the excellent 'Masters of Medicine' series, now in course of publication. Everyone knows that it was by Simpson's efforts that chloroform was accepted as an anæsthetic all over the world, in the face of unreasoning opposition from his own profession, and still more from the narrow prejudices of the religious world. These last Simpson met by studying Hebrew, and meeting and vanquishing the Biblical critics with their own weapons. To the absurd arguments that anæsthetics neutralised the intention of the Almighty in making pain a necessary and beneficent agency, he conclusively pointed out the harm done to religion by such an argument, reminding his critics that if God had willed pain to be irremediable, no possible device of man could ever have removed it. Simpson was great, not as a man of science only, but as a philanthropist and medical reformer, and, as his biographer remarks, he was guided by high ideals and a joyous unhesitating belief that all good things were possible, and that right must prevail. His life story is told by Dr. Laing Gordon in a very agreeable manner, and his book will greatly interest even non-professional readers, for all are interested in the great discoveries that alleviate human pain and suffering. (Unwin. 3s. 6d.)

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LONDON, JANUARY 1, 1898.

THE NEW YEAR.

WITH a humble prayer for guidance THE INQUIRER enters on a new year. Fifty-six years ago it was established in the Service of Truth and Freedom in Religion, when it was an anxious question whether Unitarians, who had inherited principles of spiritual freedom, should be left, as a worshipping people, in possession of their old meeting-houses, held on open trusts. The Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844 declared that they should not be disturbed, and that their religious life might continue to be nurtured amid the scenes consecrated by the piety of generations. That was a lesson not to be forgotten. Those old chapels are held in trust for the worship of God, with liberty to follow Truth in all the fresh movements of thought, which are inevitable in a growing life, amid changing conditions of knowledge. Since then, many other worshipping societies have been formed and churches have been built, united in this fellowship; and as a people we are known at present in the world, and amid the different sections of the Christian Church, as 'the Unitarian body.' But it is a body, which, if true to its fundamental principle of the inward life with God, has a living soul unfettered by dogmatic limitations. 'The Unitarians' are a people who worship in Free Churches, and would gladly make the fellowship of their religious life truly Catholic. Their ideal is not sectarian prosperity, but the Kingdom of God on earth, and the communion of all living souls, here and beyond the veil, in the one household of God. They honour every church that is moved by whole-hearted conviction and is labouring to redeem the life of men from evil and to bring them nearer to God; they desire to live in brotherly

companionship with their neighbours, and to learn from others all the good they have to teach. And in their own immediate circle they desire to gather in all who are hungering for a truer life with God, who have not yet found the religious home which satisfied, and yet desire to be together in reverent worship and seeking of His truth, and in a genuine brotherhood.

To this service THE INQUIRER is devoted; to the strengthening of the religious life of these Free Churches, the nurture of the inward spirit of reverence and love, which unites amid many differences of intellectual apprehension, and the maintenance of their testimony to the power of the Christian life. And as these churches desire no sectarian exclusiveness, but only to be ministers to all the needs of men, so THE INQUIRER, while it aims at serving the highest interests of the churches, is devoted by that very fact to a larger service.

There are many earnest religious minds separated from all Church fellowship, many to whom our churches also do not appeal, or who, if they are drawn towards us and might add greatly to the strength of our common life, are separated by distance or other difficulties from the worship and work of our Societies. These also we desire to serve, and we trust that to many such THE INQUIRER may be a messenger that brings good news, welcome for its own sake, for the gladness of its testimony, telling of the progress of truth, and of earnest efforts in many different fields for the Kingdom of God, and may strengthen the sense of companionship in the deeper spiritual life among friends who perhaps may never meet face to face, but are united in a common trust and hope, and a common service of the Highest.

We enter on the New Year with good hope, because there is a Strength in which we trust, and our service is not of self-interest, but for a Cause that is in other hands than ours. The appeal of many pathetic needs comes to us, from the solitary, the sorrowful, the darkened heart, and the oppressed. Who are we, that we can help? We must give ourselves to God, and seek to be ministers of His holy and compassionate Spirit—each one of us in our own place, and our churches in their place. We are called to be servants of Truth, to live in the strength of Eternal Righteousness, and to be united as children of the Father in heaven. We have to manifest the power of the inward life with God, to see that the law of truth and right does prevail in our own hearts, and, so far as we have influence, in all the concerns of men. And in this we are sustained by the noblest companionship, for these are the things for which CHRIST cared, we learn of him the full meaning of our manhood, and joining the great throng of his disciples, we have to do our part to carry on his work, and to make men understand with a new clearness and thankfulness to God all the grace and truth of that great Chief of faithful souls.

We desire that Truth shall prevail, and it will be the humble aim of THE

INQUIRER in this new year, as in the past, to see clearly and to speak fearlessly those things which seem to make for the Kingdom of God; but in all things to observe Charity, and to remember that the Father is leading His children by many different ways to the goal of the perfect life, and that greatest of all is the Love which never faileth.

IN WHOM IS NO VARIABleness NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING.

It fortifies my soul to know,
That, though I perish, Truth is so:
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.
A. H. CLOUGH.

WORK ON EARTH.

Why dost thou talk of death, laddie?
Why dost thou long to go?
The Master that hath placed thee here
Hath work for thee to do.
Why dost thou talk of heaven, laddie?
What wouldst thou say in heaven
When the Master asks, 'What hast thou done
With the talents I have given?'?
'I gave thee wealth and influence,
And the poor around thee spread:
Where are the sheep and lambs of mine
That thou hast reared and fed?
'I gave thee wit and eloquence,
Thy brethren to persuade:
Where are the thousands by thy word
More wise and holy made?
'I placed thee in a land of light,
Where the Gospel round thee shone:
Where is the heavenly-mindedness
I find in all my own?
'And last I sent thee chastisement,
That thou mightst be my son:
Where is the trusting faith that says,
"Father, Thy will be done"?'
JOHN WILSON (Christopher North).

TRUE RELIGION.

I WAS early convinced that true religion consists in an inward life, wherein the heart doth love and reverence God the Creator, and learn to exercise true justice and goodness, not only toward all men, but also toward the brute creatures,—that, as the mind is moved by an inward principle to love God as an invisible, incomprehensible Being, so by the same principle it is moved to love Him in all His manifestations in the visible world,—that, as by His breath the flame of life was kindled in all animal sensible creatures, to say we love God as unseen and at the same time exercise cruelty toward the least creature moving by His life, or by life derived from Him, is a contradiction in itself. I found no narrowness respecting sects and opinions, but believed that sincere, upright-hearted people, in every society, who truly love God, are accepted of Him.

As I lived under the cross, and simply followed the openings of truth, my mind, from day to day, was more enlightened. I looked upon the works of God in this visible creation, and an awfulness covered me. My heart was tender, and often contrite, and universal love to my fellow-creatures increased in me.

JOHN WOOLMAN.

THE CONSTANCY OF NATURE AND
THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

A SERMON.

BY THE REV. DR. MARTINEAU.

While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.—*Genesis viii. 22.*

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.—*Genesis ix. 13.*

The legends with which the Bible opens, of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood, embody an idea which no progress in Geology, no extension of History will ever deprive of their deep truth. They represent this Universe as not only springing from the bidding of the Eternal Mind, but as ruled by His momentary thought. It is bound by no customs, but pliant to every purpose He conceives; is hindered by no observances from reflecting the changes of emotion, and bringing out upon its surface the brilliancy of His love or the shadow of His frown. His judgments freely alter the natures He has made; and when man deforms His divine image, He lets the balanced elements go out of tune in answer to the discords of sin. The blessed Eden of man becomes the private park of God; the Tree of Life now grows unseen, and propagates no seed. The earth, no longer gay with its green sod, is choked with the thistle and the thorn. Pain and sorrow follow on the fruitfulness of Nature, and the sunniest vista of life has its perspective closed by the cavern of Death. Nay, as human wickedness spreads and shocks the moral sense of God, the very work of creation is undone, the sluices of the firmament are burst, and the waters above the heaven mingle again with those below, and a remnant only is spared for a new experiment. Thus far, Nature does but lend itself to the administrative hand of God, who does not hesitate to turn it hither and thither by the movements of His thought. But, from the moment when the Dove took leave of the Ark, He determined to make another use of the visible frame of things. It should no longer express the momentary lights and shadows of His mind, but that invariable constancy by which in truth they were all projected: the unsteadiness should disappear from the heavens and the earth, and they should be patient as His mercy, severely punctual as His holiness. Withdrawing from them the living mobility of His countenance, He would fix upon them one expression, and leave them as the statue of His majesty. He would resort to other media to declare His pity and displeasure. His love and approbation would make Himself felt as He passed by, on the invisible ways of the human Soul, but would swerve and sway no more before the eye of Sense; making with it, through His bow of beauty on the cloud a silent covenant that 'While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.'

Judged by the test of Natural History, all this may be fanciful and false. There may be no ground for supposing that God once changed the principles on which the universe was governed; or that the courses of the sun and stars, the light and air, the clouds and streams, were ever less steady than at this hour. We may detect no age when the universe was not yet bound and opaque, but flexible and transparent to the transitions of the Divine thought, an open theatre of living interposition, changing its ways with

the modulations of the Creative Soul. It may be true that, whatever track of primeval time we cross, we shall in vain listen for His audible voice upon the upper air, and watch for His form amid the forest trees; and shall find already the impress clear of the order which Kepler traced, the laws that Newton proved, the relations which Faraday described. It may be a chronological mistake to speak of two successive periods, in one of which God governed freshly out of pure moral considerations, moulding and turning the elements to suit the emergencies of human conduct, while in the other He pledged Himself to the perseverance of an ever-during mechanism. But the error is *only* chronological: it is in the date, not in the thing dated. The distinction set forth in these two periods between the free spiritual action of God on the one hand, and His fixed rules on the other, from which neither guilt nor goodness can prevail with Him to swerve, is just and profound; only, the two methods, instead of being tried in succession, eternally co-exist. Yet that very succession denotes another truth. It sets the moral purpose before the mechanical usages of God, and brings the inexorable Laws out of the personal liberty of His affections. Were Nature to tell simply the story of its source, and, regardless of all else, restrain nothing of the feeling whence it comes, it would be as the face of an angel or a child, changing as it looked on good or ill, clear with heavenly love, or sad with holy anger. But a world like that, sensitive to every sin, could be fit only for the residence of Saints: it would smite with curse, it would drown in floods, a race the imagination of whose heart is often evil from its youth; and so, for man's sake, to give a ground of expectation to his intellect and discipline to his character, God refrains from sending His looks through the heavens and the earth, and retires from them into reticence, and imposes on them ordinances which, think of us as He may, shall tell us nothing but His faithfulness. Thus, Law is the fruit of Choice, the self-renunciation of the infinite Pity, the long-suffering of a divine Patience. It is not the rhythm of some dance of death performed by the galvanized corpse of Fate; but the persistent movement of a living mind, the habitual ways of whose beneficence, wisdom, and affection, *make* the only Necessity there is. First, Love and Thought; then, Law and Rule; this is the order of Reality. They may not have separately and successively occupied two acts in the drama of Creation; but in its invention and development as a whole, this is assuredly the true arrangement of causality and subordination. How often does the oldest myth contain more truth than the newest science!

There is a singular contrast between the feeling which Nature's constancy would produce when first established, and that which it is apt to awaken after long continuance. Suppose it true that the Creator began with ruling the world, not indeed by humour and caprice, but by immediate regard to the deserts and characters of men, so that the daily light and nightly dews, the winter frosts and summer fruits, were commanded and countermanded according to the contingencies of the human will; and suppose that at a certain date this mode were changed for a fixed order, in which the rule of Nature should detach itself from the moral government of the soul. With what joy and hope would men welcome the new reliance, look at the stranger of peace

arching its colours across the sky, and feel the strife between sin and God withdraw from the battle-field of the universe into the silent chambers of the individual heart! Such a moment of relief would indeed be like a stepping from the restless flood upon the steady mountain, and hearing the wind, so wild of late upon the hollow waves, now whispering sweetly to the young grass, and beholding the sunshine broken no more by the cold and barren waters, but eagerly drunk in by the grateful soil. And when day by day the promise of the quiet order failed not, when the sun knew its hour for quenching the stars, and the stars were ready lit ere the sun retired; when the fields and springs could lie expectant of the early and the latter rain, and in the very faintness of heat watch for the cooling of their thirst; when the fig-tree, constant to its fruit, never grew the thistle, nor did the olive turn into the thorn; when all the natures of things held persistently on, and the succession of events came regularly round; men that before had been tossed on an uncertain sea, and driven before an incalculable wind, would feel the blessedness of a sure dependence, and adore the precious veracity of God.

But no sooner does their trust become habitual, than it parts with its first joy and love; begins to demand rather than confide; insinuates that God cannot help being punctual; that it is not any choice of will, but a necessity of nature; and that where no good is intended there is no goodness to be revered. Their foolish heart becomes darkened, and takes the veil on its affections to be an eclipse of God; the numbness of its own palsy it gives to the life of the universe; and, because it is itself stupefied for worship, presumes the death of all that is adorable.

And so the more the dear God is faithful to us, the less are we affectionate to Him: we can sing our song in the morning of the world; but we are mocking ere 'tis night, and for Him to be true for ever is our favourite ground for not believing Him at all! Did He give us only broken notices of His sovereignty, only half the evidence of His trustworthiness; did He not so firmly keep the rules which He has laid down; did the earth sometimes stagger on its axis, and the sun forget to rise—we should be more ready to own His presence, and the more readily fly to his protection the less of it there was. But just because all is so constant, because when He calleth out the starry host by number, 'not one faileth,' because He repents not of the four seasons, and makes them neither three nor five, because while centuries fulfil their cycles, the moon was never known to be late in her fulness, nor the year to deal out by one instant short measure of the time; because the light from ten thousand sources, whether in the domestic space of our own system or in the most foreign heaven, keeps everywhere the same rate without hurry or delay, so that we can publish its arrival, and be sure to find it there; because the very wasting of other objects is but an example of His imperishable faith, and races are born and die, and sea and mountains change their place, without one breach of His everlasting word, and the shifting outline of created things is seen on the measureless disc of His eternity—our perverse hearts, so fickle in themselves, think the infinite patience to be impossible, and fancy thought and love could not hold out so long and far; and our return for the very perfection of our God is that we proclaim Him only Fate.

Yet how otherwise could a great parent Mind, of wisest and most wakeful affection, establish claims upon our trust and veneration? He has framed our intellectual nature to expect a constant order and reckon the future by the past. And the outer universe truly answers to this surmise; and uniformity in Nature does but verify the promise made in the constitution of our minds. And after all, to a clear eye and a pure heart, how little is there that should weary or benumb in the punctual cycles of the world! There are so many of them, and all of different lengths, that there is no end to the crossing lines of change by which they multiply variety, and startle us with sweet or sad surprise. The earth always takes its twenty-four hours to spin its round, but the shadow on its hemisphere creeps with its silent edge over continent and sea, now giving the advantage to night and home, and now to day and the summer fields. The seasons measure themselves out with unvaried repetition; but with what different charm, according as we have counted many of them or few! The bursting earth of spring, the musical air, the gleamy skies, the foliage fresh as the cheek of a young child, look into us in our earlier years as with a brilliant challenge of our sympathy; starting the melody of gladness, for us to strike in with our purest harmony; communing with us on loving terms, like with like, and hope with hope. When life is far advanced, the same fair show falls upon an altered soul, and spreads a picture there, if of less gorgeous colouring, yet of tenderer lights and deeper distances. To the elderly, spring is like the infant to the grandparents, a glad reminiscence for themselves, and a gladder hope for others, and a dear joy within itself.

The free life of our own souls runs through every mechanical cycle, and imparts to that which is called the same, varieties and contrasts the most rich and solemn. The weeks are called equal that bring us, each day of rest, to this house of prayer again. Yet who can compare the contents which our several memories lay at the feet of God in our reckoning here? The heedless and unawakened, who hardly have an inward life, but chiefly buy and sell, and hear the news and sleep, cannot but bring an emptiness hither, to carry an emptiness away. The scrupulous and anxious, who trail on without the fresh soul of trust, toiling only at the oars of duty, without spreading the sails of faith, rest here in vain, with a hundred problems of the voyage of life which only death will solve. Some perhaps with hearts overcharged with their first great sorrow or their first deep sin, feel weary and heavy-laden as with the burden of life, and almost old enough to remember the voice, 'Come unto me, and I will give you rest.' And so to the mourning or rejoicing, to the remiss or the earnest, to the young or the old, do the weeks, though the same by the clock, most variously fill themselves, and shrink to a cypher or swell into an existence.

None but those whose inner heart is withered, whose moral vitality has collapsed under the opiates of custom, who suffer themselves to be passively handed over from night to day, and day to night, and simply passed through the cycles of Nature, can complain of the periodicity of existence or feel the constancies of the universe at variance with the presence of the living God. Vain indeed is it for natures like ours to appeal to the antiquity of physical Law as an excuse for oblivion of

Him. For we carry in our own souls something older than the seasons; traces of God's eternal veracity more gentle, yet more awful, than the successions of summer and winter, morning and evening: a record of certainties in His government, not less reliable than the courses of the heavens, and revealing instead of hiding the perpetual vigilance of His eye, and actual stirrings of His spirit. The moral law written in our conscience has a deeper and more indigenous seat than the natural law transcribed from without upon our intellect. We know that 'His countenance beholdeth the upright' with more assurance than that He will keep the moon to her times; that 'the wicked' will ever be 'as the troubled sea,' more certainly than that the tides will continue to sweep from shore to shore; that the 'graces of the holy soul are His delight'; better than that: as He looks round the zones of the universe He finds all too good to change. The conviction of our hearts that truth, justice, mercy, are inherently and eternally lovely, and of binding authority over all souls, actual and possible, is far deeper than the persuasion of our understandings, that the order of the external creation is universal and perpetual. We know that the form of that physical order has once begun, and is a thing ordained: we know that, on the other hand, the very first spirit created was born into moral distinctions which were always there, uncreated even by the Creator, and comprehending even the all-comprehensive Mind. Physical law, with all its steadiness, is but God's outward action; Moral law is His own eternal Self, the essential sphere and theatre of His spiritual existence, as external space is of His natural activity. And the conscience in us that reflects this inner essence of His spirit is accordingly our ultimate oracle of His presence as the God of living holiness, the still small voice of revelation, to which we should more reverently listen than to the thunders of the tempest and the sweeping of the winds.

THE CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

THE INQUIRER goes into a great many homes where there are children, and I should like them to feel that they also have a share in the paper. We are always glad to have the children with us in our religious services, and the elders often enjoy a special children's service quite as much as the little ones. In some chapels the minister gives five or ten minutes of the regular service every Sunday to the children. There is a hymn especially for them, and then he talks to them just for those few minutes, so that they can all attend and be interested. That is easier than listening to a whole long sermon. Now, I want this children's column to be like that. I want the children who read it, or have it read to them at home, to feel that I am talking to them, and often I shall ask some other friend to talk to them. And I hope they will be always interested, and will like to see THE INQUIRER come every week, because there is something for the children in it.

Let me first wish you all a Happy New Year. It is pleasant to wake on a clear sunny morning, and feel that a new day has begun. There is so much to do, and so much to enjoy. And if you are sorry and ashamed for something you did or said yesterday, or for having been impatient and bad-tempered, you can now begin again. You can turn over a new leaf. How pleasant

it is to feel that! You can do a better page of writing in the book of your life, with no more careless mistakes, no more ugly blots. And so it is with a new year. It is only a larger day in our life, and we ought to begin with this happy thought that our Heavenly Father, who gives us our life, means us to enjoy it and use it well, and that we can make this a better day than the last. So I wish you a Happy New Year; and I will give you this text for a good beginning: 'Walk as children of light' (Ephesians v. 8.).

We begin the New Year just after Christmas, and nothing could be better. We take with us the special happiness of Christmas thoughts and all the brightness of that time. 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.' Those words have been ringing in our hearts, and we have thought of all that Jesus meant in his teaching of brotherly love and unselfishness and gentleness, and of the tender care and love of our heavenly Father. This has been like a beautiful refrain in the song of our Christmas gladness, in the home gatherings, the messages from friends near and distant, the pleasant gifts, the eagerness to be doing acts of kindness, especially to those who have little brightness in their lives. And all this we take with us into the new year. If Christmas has been so happy and so full of brightness, why not keep that Christmas temper through all the year? Let us try always to 'walk as children of light.'

Last Christmas I read somewhere a little story, which I will tell you now.

Maggie was a poor ignorant girl, who had lived all her life in a big town, and had no one to teach her much that was good. Her home was very rough, and she was often cruelly treated, with no loving care to lead her right. Christmas had meant to her nothing but greediness and coarse, noisy pleasures. Then one year, in the middle of December, on a cold foggy night while she was out in the street, Maggie was knocked down and so badly hurt that she had to be taken into the hospital. And as she lay there in her bed, enjoying the quiet and comfort, a gentle lady came one evening and sat by her, and talked about Jesus and the gladness he brought into the world. She told Maggie of his kindness and his great love for little children, and of the heavenly Father in whom he trusted, and who cares for us all; and how she herself might be a follower of Jesus, and have him for a real friend, to help her to be good and to live as one of the children of the Father in heaven. This was very wonderful to Maggie. She had never heard anything like it before. It made her very glad, and she felt eager to be strong and well again, to begin this better, happier life. Just then, one of the nurses, who was tired and looked rather cross, went by; and Maggie noticed, and called to her: 'Nurse, have you heard about Jesus?' 'What do you mean, child?' 'Have you heard how Jesus is our friend, and we have a Father in heaven, who cares for us all?' 'Of course I have.' 'Oh,' said Maggie, wondering, 'I thought you couldn't have heard. You looked so glum.' Maggie did not mean to be rude, but the light of her new happiness was shining in her face, and she could not understand how anyone could know this, and not be glad.

Now, think what will make you 'children of light.'

1. Cheerfulness, with bright, pleasant faces.
2. Truthfulness, which is like a clear, beautiful light, making people trust you.

3. Goodness, with real, unselfish love and care for others.

These are given us by our Heavenly Father, and then we have to do our part, as His children. Next week I will tell you more about this. And now, I will only say once more, Let us all try in this New Year to 'walk as children of light.'

I hope you all know *Young Days*, our monthly children's magazine. Perhaps you have been taking it for years, and have got all the bound volumes. If so, they must have begun to take it in your home before the little ones were born, for *Young Days* is now twenty-two years old. But if any of you do not know it, take it for this year. It only costs a penny a month, and it has capital stories and pictures, and is full of other interesting things. There is Guild work for Sunday afternoons and evenings, with readings from the Bible, and study of the lives of heroes and heroines. This year it is to be about King Alfred, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, Channing, Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Fry, and some others. For this work the Editor gives prizes to all who do it thoroughly.

And ask your parents whether they have got *The Helper*, the book for teachers and parents for 1898. It ought to be in every one of your homes, and it ought to be read and used. There are some stories in it which children will like, and some beautiful recitations; but it is mostly for the elders, to help them to have happy times with the children. It would be difficult to find a better Helper anywhere.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES.

[Notices and Reports for this Department should be as brief as possible, and be sent in by Thursday Morning.]

Bradford.—At a recent 'At Home' in connection with the Chapel Lane Literary Society, an interesting lecture was given by Miss Hudson on her tour in Spain last spring. The lecture was illustrated by lime-light views, and there was a large attendance, the chair being taken by the Rev. E. Ceredig Jones, M.A.

Bristol: Lewin's Mead Domestic Mission.—On Wednesday week the annual party was held; over 100 members of the congregation took tea together, after which the Rev. A. N. Blatchford presided over a largely augmented meeting and in his address regretted the absence, through indisposition, of the esteemed president of the mission, Mr. A. H. Wansey. Addresses were also delivered by the Rev. C. D. Badland, M.A., Mr. J. K. Champion, and the missionary, the Rev. J. Wain. Miss Blatchford presented the prizes to the two first classes of senior scholars in the Sunday-school. During the evening, the choir of Lewin's Mead Meeting, under the direction of Mr. J. Y. Pearce, rendered some excellent music, and the first class of girls presented their teacher, Miss O. Parnall, with an inkstand, as a token of their warm regard. —On Thursday the junior scholars, some 200 in number, sat down to tea, when subsequently the prizes from the Mary Carpenter Guild, under the secretaryship of Miss Susan Worsley, were distributed by the Rev. C. D. Badland, who, along with Mr. Wain, delivered suitable addresses to the scholars.

Cardiff.—The Rev. George St. Clair's farewell sermon in the West Grove Church, on Sunday evening, gave an interesting review of the leading events of the expiring year. The year, he said, would be remembered in English history as that of the Queen's Jubilee. The celebration was one of the most impressive displays the world had ever seen. One roar of acclaim and loyalty came up from the whole British Empire. The presence of the eleven Colonial Premiers and the hearty reception they met with held out promise of a general league among us for our common safety. How mighty we then should be was suggested by the Colonial, Indian, and African troops which marched in the procession, and was grandly de-

monstrated by the naval review at Spithead. This was probably the most magnificent spectacle ever beheld, and the nation felt a thrill of intense pride, and yet we trust, said the preacher, there was no desire to be boastful or aggressive. The best feeling of the country was expressed by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in the verses beginning,

'God of our Fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far hung battle line!'

in which he warned us against the dangers of pomp and display, and bade us not put our trust in cannon, but in the Lord of Hosts. Dealing with foreign affairs and their latest development in China, Mr. St. Clair said one did not like to see the scramble for territory, but it might, perhaps, be the way of Providence to bring all the barbarous and backward tribes under the rule and tutelage of the more advanced. We had seen, he added, again this year, in various ways, that the world is still governed by force, and that nations who do not arm and organise will be overrun and dominated by others. At this period of the world's history this was very sad; at this date of the Christian era it was very discouraging. Yet there were hopeful signs. It was quite pleasant to read the other day of the Afridis, who are fighting us, sending their women and children into Peshawar for protection—into the arms of the British! We were so humane as that, even when war was raging, and the tribesmen know it and reckon upon it. Surely we might hope that this humane feeling would by-and-by put an end to war altogether.

Chowbent.—The usual Christmas morning service was held in the chapel, and was well attended. In the afternoon and evening of the same day the Christmas Party took place, when the large schoolroom was filled.—On Sunday afternoon, in place of the ordinary school, a Christmas Lantern Service was held, when a collection was taken up for the children's home at Blackpool.—On the previous Sunday special collections had been taken up in the chapel for the Poor's Fund, and on the Wednesday afternoon and evening a small sale of work, opened by Mrs. Caleb Wright, for the purpose of lessening the debt in connection with the latest additions to the Day and Sunday-school buildings, etc., was held, and realised £74 15s. 7d. —During the season just closed, a series of Sunday evening special sermons in the chapel, of a non-controversial character, has proved a success. The preachers have been the Revs. C. H. Wellbeloved, Dendy Agate, R. Travers Herford, John Moore, and J. J. Wright.—The Lantern Services, held in the Volunteer Hall, the largest in the district, from eight to nine o'clock on Sunday evenings, had, during 1896—7, become so overcrowded that for this, the fifth year, means had to be devised by which the numbers attending might be more in keeping with the accommodation. The means adopted have proved a success, and, although the numbers have not been so large as in previous seasons, the moral and spiritual good done under the more comfortable circumstances is believed to have been even greater.

Devonport.—The last meeting for the term of the Christ Church Literary Society was held on Tuesday week last, when an interesting debate took place on questions relating to supersensuous phenomena; 'Keener Sense or Hallucination' was the title, Mr. J. A. Barnes and Mr. J. W. Cock being the leaders on respective sides. At previous meetings Dr. Oldfield, of Broughton Hospital, gave an impressive lecture on Food Reform, and Mr. T. J. Dunstan an admirable talk on a holiday tour, which was illustrated by splendid limelight views. Twelve meetings of a varied character have been held this term, and have been uniformly successful.

Dewsbury.—On Tuesday evening the usual Christmas congregational soirée took place in the Unity Church schoolroom, Dewsbury. There was a large attendance, the decorations were exceptionally chaste and seasonable, and the proceedings throughout were marked by an enthusiasm which was truly inspiring and highly encouraging. After tea Mr. J. S. Mathers, J.P., of Leeds (president of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union), occupied the chair, though at a later stage his place as chairman was ably filled by Mr. May, of Dewsbury. The Revs. Charles Hargrove, M.A. (Leeds), J. G. Slater (Pudsey), and other well known ladies and gentlemen connected with the cause were also present. Mr. Mathers and Mr. Hargrove gave excellent and stirring addresses appertaining to church life, and they were followed by one, by Mr. Fred Clayton (Leeds) on the importance of the Sunday-school as the nursery of the church. Mr. Crawshaw, the choir-master, had provided a choice musical programme, and it was carried out in a praiseworthy manner, Mr. A. Sykes, the organist, ably presiding at the piano.

Edinburgh.—The annual soirée was held in the Oddfellows' Hall, December 15, the Rev. R. B. Drummond presiding. After tea, the Chairman

delivered a brief address, in the course of which he remarked that the different institutions connected with the church might be described as being in a fairly healthy state. An interesting programme of songs and recitations was then gone through, the proceedings concluding with 'Auld Lang Syne.'—On the 24th ult., the Sunday-school soirée was held in the chapel, when there was a good attendance of scholars and their parents and friends. The proceedings commenced with singing the Christmas hymn 'It came upon the midnight clear.'

Glasgow: St. Vincent-street.—The annual Sunday-school soirée was held on Tuesday last. There was a large gathering, 345 sitting down to tea. The Rev. A. Lazenby took the chair, and was supported by the Rev. A. C. Henderson, B.D., Paisley; Messrs. J. Graham, J. Brownlie, and W. Wilson. The tea was prepared by the ladies of the Social Working Society and teachers, and was well served by a large band of willing assistants. After tea and a few words of welcome from the Chairman, a play, entitled 'Dick Whittington and his Cat,' was ably performed by the scholars. The play was greatly enjoyed. Special thanks are due to Messrs. A. Horton and A. Ballantyne for their labour in preparing the play and scenery. Games and dancing brought a very happy evening to a close.

Halifax.—At the usual Christmas service the collection for the Poor's-purse was £9 18s. 11½d.—The annual school and congregational tea party was held on Monday, Dec. 28. After tea, the Rev. F. E. Millson was chairman of the meeting. The reports of the secretary and treasurer were passed, and short addresses given by the Rev. E. Ceredig Jones, M.A., of Bradford, the Rev. J. Arthur Pearson, of Oldham, and Messrs. Arnold, H. Wadsworth, Slater (Bradford), H. Dyson, H. Dawtrej, J. Teal, and Jas. Whitehead. A selection of Christmas carols and glees was given by the chapel choir, under the direction of Mr. A. Wilson. The attendance was not so good as we had hoped for.

Liscard (Farewell to the Rev. V. D. Davis).—On Wednesday week a soirée was held in the Liscard Unitarian Church, to bid farewell to the Rev. V. D. Davis, at the close of his five years' ministry. There was a full attendance of the congregation and their friends, among those present being the Revs. R. A. Armstrong and H. W. Hawkes. In the course of the evening, Mr. S. Wellington, the chairman, spoke in terms of very cordial appreciation of the services Mr. Davis had rendered, and made, on behalf of the congregation, a farewell gift of a silver tea and coffee service. Mr. H. P. Houghton also spoke, and Mr. Davis acknowledged the gift, and spoke of the great happiness he and his wife had found in their work at Liscard, and of the good prospects of the church.—On the following evening the children's Christmas party was held, and the members of the Children's Union gave to Mr. Davis a handsome inkstand. The plans for the new church and school buildings, to be given by Mrs. Elam, have been passed by the District Council, and the work will be proceeded with as soon as possible. The architects are Messrs. Ware and Rathbone, of Liverpool.

London: Essex Church.—The various Christmas services have been full of interest. The Christmas Cantata, prepared by the choir, was given on the 19th ult. in the evening, and much appreciated by a large congregation.—The morning service on Christmas Day was attended by a faithful company, despite the fogs and the slippery roads. The Carol service on the following evening was much enjoyed and well attended. The church has been tastefully decorated by willing workers, who deserve abundant thanks for their labours. The January Calendar can be had at Essex Hall.

Padiham.—The Rev. E. T. Russell, who is leaving Nazareth Chapel for South St. Mungo-st. Church, Glasgow, was last Sunday the recipient of two farewell presents, one from the members of his own congregation, the other from the Blue Ribbon Union, to the work of which he has devoted much time.

Pudsey.—A Social Union was formed in the autumn, and opened with a conversazione on the evening of Sept. 29. The closing meeting of the first session, which has been most successful, took the form, on Wednesday, Dec. 15, of a social party. Lectures have been given by Rev. E. C. Jones, M.A., on 'The Women of George Eliot's Novels'; Rev. J. McDowell, on 'Australia'; Rev. J. G. Slater, on 'Shakespeare's England'; Mr. W. J. Noble, on 'Reminiscences of the Franco-Prussian War'; and Mr. A. C. Slater, B.Sc., on 'Volcanoes.' There have also been debates on 'Socialism and Christianity' and the 'Engineer's Lock-out,' while three evenings were devoted to musical and other entertainments. The society numbers 90 members, and the audiences have ranged from 50 to 130.

Saffron Walden.—On Christmas Sunday, at the close of the morning service in the General Baptist Chapel, the Rev. J. A. Brinkworth pre-

sented each scholar and teacher in the Sunday-school, and some other friends, with a copy of the special Diamond Jubilee edition of the revised version of the Bible. Each copy has an excellent portrait of the Queen for frontispiece, whilst the cover bears the crest of the University of Cambridge, with the dates '1837—1897.' The number given away was sixty-five. It is the same edition as the 11,000 given away to all the children in Dudley on the 21st June last, Mr. Brinkworth, by request, taking part in that distribution.—This place of worship is now lighted with the Wellsbach incandescent gas lighting system, to the advantage of the worshippers.

Shepton Mallet.—The members of the Unitarian circle held a social meeting in the schoolroom adjoining the chapel, on Tuesday evening, Dec. 14th, when there was a good attendance, notwithstanding the stormy weather. The programme of vocal and instrumental music included glees by the choir and songs by members and friends, which were much enjoyed. The accompanists were Mrs. T. Allen and Miss Emily Phillis. An address was given by the Rev. Lindsey T. Badcock, and recitations by Mr. Phillis and Mr. W. L. Badcock. A very pleasant evening was spent. The circle now numbers about forty members.

South Wales.—At Capel-y-bryn, on Christmas Day, the Sunday-school, with that from Sychbant, held their annual meeting. The two schools were catechised by the minister, the Rev. J. Davies, and went through their work in an admirable manner. Mr. Davies urged the need of more teachers and more zeal in the work on the large gathering of those who were present.—The schools of Capel-y-groes and Allt-y-placca also met on the same day at the former place, and were similarly catechised, with satisfactory results, by the Rev. E. E. Jenkins, the minister.—At Cribyn, on Christmas Eve, a grand concert was held, which gave great pleasure to a large audience, with satisfactory financial results.

Swinton.—An excellent piece of work has just been effected here by the enterprise of the young men. The school, which has for some time been much in need of cleaning, painting, etc., has been thoroughly overhauled, painted in oil, and tastefully decorated free of cost. We are all very proud at this display of energy on the part of our elder male scholars. A social party to pay for materials was held on Wednesday week, at which the workers were thanked.

Walthamstow.—The iron church which has been erected here, and of which the foundation-stone was laid a few weeks ago by Mrs. Edwin Lawrence, was opened for religious worship on Christmas Day. The service of dedication was conducted by the Revs. Robert Spears, T. E. M. Edwards, Francis Wood, and John Tovey. The lessons were read by two laymen, Messrs. Ginever and Galloway, members of the Highgate Unitarian Church, who had previously conducted services in a hall at Walthamstow; and an address was also given by Miss Emily Sharpe. A Sunday-school is to be commenced in the present year.

OUR CALENDAR.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2.

It is requested that notice of any alteration in the Calendar be sent to the Publisher not later than Thursday afternoon.

Bermondsey, Fort-road, Upper Grange-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. HAROLD RILETT.

Brixton, Unitarian Christian Church, Effra-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. HARWOOD, B.A.

Croydon, Free Christian Church, Wellesley-rd., West Croydon, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS.

Deptford, Church-street, 11.15 A.M. and 6.30 P.M. Rev. A. J. MARCHANT.

Essex Church, The Mall, Notting-hill-gate, 11 A.M., 'The Roll Call,' and 7 P.M., 'The Lord's Prayer,' Rev. FRANK K. FREESTON. New Year Communion at noon. Benevolent Fund Collection.

Forest Gate, corner of Dunbar-road, Upton-lane 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. HOLMSHAW.

Hackney, New Gravel Pit Church, Chatham-place, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. S. FLETCHER WILLIAMS.

Hampstead, Rosslyn-hill Chapel, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Dr. BROOKE HERFORD. At close of Morning Service, the Communion.

Highgate Hill, Unitarian Christian Church, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. R. SPEARS.

Islington, Unity Church, Upper-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. G. DAWES HICKS, M.A., Ph.D.

Kentish Town, Free Christian Church, Clarence-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. A. FARQUHARSON. Kilburn, Quex-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. J. E. STRONGE.

Lewisham, Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. C. POPE.

Little Portland-street Chapel, near Oxford-circus, 11.15 A.M., Young People's Service, and 7 P.M., 'Thoughts for the New Year,' Rev. H. RAWLINGS, M.A.

Mansford-street Church and Mission, Bethnal Green, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. CADMAN.

Peckham, Avondale-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. G. CARTER.

Richmond, Free Church, Ormond-road, 11.15 A.M., 3 P.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. SILAS FARRINGTON.

Stamford-street, Blackfriars-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Dr. AHMED SHAH (late of Tibet).

3 P.M., Children's Service, Rev. W. C. BOWIE.

Stepney-Green, College Chapel, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., L. TAVENER.

Stoke Newington, The Green, 11.15 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. WOODING, B.A.

Wandsworth, Unitarian Christian Church, East-hill, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. W. G. TARRANT, B.A.

Wood Green, Unity Hall, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. Dr. MUMMERY.

Woolwich, Masonic Hall, Anglesey-road, Plumstead, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M.

PROVINCIAL.

BATH, Trim-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. F. W. STANLEY.

BEDFORD, Library (side room), 6.30 P.M., Rev. ROWLAND HILL.

BIRMINGHAM, Church of the Messiah, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. L. P. JACKS.

BLACKPOOL, Banks-street, North Shore, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. WM. BINNS.

BLACKPOOL, Unitarian Lay Church, Masonic Hall, Waterloo-road, South Shore, 6.30 P.M.

BOOTLE, Free Church Hall, Stanley-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. H. W. HAWKES.

BOURNEMOUTH, Unitarian Church, West-hill-road, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. C. C. COE.

BRIGHTON, Christ Church (Free Christian), New-road, North-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. A. HOOD.

BUXTON, Hartington-road Church, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M.

CANTERBURY, Blackfriars, 11 A.M.

DOVER, Adrian-street, near Market-square, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. S. BURROWS.

EASTBOURNE, Natural History Museum, Lismore-rd., 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Mr. E. CAPLETON.

GUILDFORD, Ward-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. A. FALLOWS.

HORSHAM, Free Christian Church, Worthing-road, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. J. J. MARTEN.

LEEDS, Mill Hill, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. CHARLES HARGROVE, M.A. Morning, 'The Surcease of Time.'

LIVERPOOL, Hope-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. R. A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

LIVERPOOL, Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. L. SCHRODER.

LIVERPOOL, Renshaw-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. Dr. KLEIN.

MANCHESTER, Sale, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. JAMES FORREST, M.A.

MANCHESTER, Strangeways, 10.30 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., MANCHESTER, Upper Brook-street Free Church, 10.45 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. C. PEAUGH.

NEWPORT, I.W., Unitarian Christian Church, High-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. J. JUPP.

OXFORD, Manchester College, 11.30 A.M., Rev. C. B. UPTON, B.A., B.Sc.

PORTSMOUTH, General Baptist Chapel, St. Thomas-street, 6.45 P.M., Mr. THOMAS BOND.

PORTSMOUTH, High-street Chapel, 11 A.M. and 6.45 P.M., Mr. G. COSSENS PRIOR.

RAMSGATE, Assembly Rooms, High-street, 11 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. T. R. SKEMP.

READING, Unitarian Free Church, London-road, 11.15 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. E. A. VOYSEY, B.A.

SCARBOROUGH, Westborough, 10.45 A.M. and 7 P.M., Rev. E. L. H. THOMAS, B.A.

SOUTHPORT, Portland-street Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. C. H. WELLBELOVED.

TORQUAY, Unity Hall, Lower Union-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. PRIESTLEY PRIME.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Mechanics' Institute, Dudley-rd., 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M.

WEYMOUTH, Oddfellows' Hall, Market-street, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. E. C. BENNETT.

YORK, St. Saviourgate Church, 11 A.M. and 6.30 P.M., Rev. W. BIRKS, F.R.A.S.

Cape Town, Free Protestant Unitarian Church, Hout-street, 6.30 P.M., Rev. R. BALMFORTH.

'THE INQUIRER' CALENDAR.

SUNDAY SERVICES are advertised at a charge of 10s. per year, prepaid; a space of two lines being given to each announcement; extra lines are charged 4d. each. Orders can be sent for a portion of the year, not less than thirteen weeks at the same rate. Calendar Notices not prepaid £1 the year. Single Announcements 6d. per line. All information as to the change of preachers should reach the Office not later than Thursday.

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DEATHS.

SOTHERN—At Norwich, December 26, William Alexander, second son of the late Samuel Sothern, of that city, aged 73.

WILLIAMS—On December 23, at 84, Evering-road, Stoke Newington, N., aged 59, Elizabeth, the beloved wife of the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams. Friends will please accept this, the only intimation.

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The Committee are desirous of making Alterations to their School and Chapel Premises, and earnestly appeal to the Unitarian Public for their support. It is intended to build a School Kitchen with Classroom above, the Architect's estimate for which is £120. Also to provide New Seats for the Schoolroom, New Heating Apparatus for the Chapel, Decorating the Interior, and Painting and Pointing the Exterior. The total amount required will reach £300. The Congregation are entirely of the working classes, and quite unable to raise the necessary amount themselves, but have undertaken to raise £50.

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